

only in control of the system but in possession of certain and accurate information as to its working.

Mr. ERB. It appears to me that we are wasting a good deal of time on voters' lists. In reading over this Bill, I was struck with surprise to see that in Prince Edward Island they have no voters' list at all. That set me wondering whether the people of Prince Edward Island are more intelligent than the rest of us and whether there is more political morality and less partisanship than among the people of this province. If it is possible in Prince Edward Island to conduct an election without a voters' list and conduct it satisfactorily to the people—and I suppose elections there are held in a manner satisfactory to the people—why is it that we of the other provinces could not do the same? To do without a voters' list would be to save a great deal of expense and a great deal of wrangling. I would like to hear the Minister of Marine and Fisheries give an account of how they conduct the elections there and whether they are satisfactory. If they are, I think we could not do better than adopt the election machinery in use in Prince Edward Island.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES** (Sir Louis Davies). I may tell my hon. friend (Mr. Erb) that the system that prevails in Prince Edward Island is perfectly satisfactory to the people, there is never the slightest hitch or the slightest trouble. It is largely an agricultural community. The province is divided into small districts where every elector is known. But though we get along exceedingly well, I should be sorry to try to force that system upon the large towns or upon the other provinces. The principle that this House has endorsed is that we should take as the franchise for this House the franchises which are found to be satisfactory in the several provinces. And in doing that, we adopt the machinery which experience has shown to be best adapted to carry out the end we have in view.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Would the hon. gentleman state what that is?

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES.** As to Prince Edward Island, the returning officer divides the constituency into districts of about 200 voters. On the morning of election, a man comes up to vote—

Mr. HUGHES. How do they know whether there are 200 or 2,000 voters?

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES.** There is not the slightest difficulty in working the system. It has been working for forty years and no difficulty has arisen. The returning officer knows his county and he subdivides it, and the divisions are known to everybody and have been for years. At the polls are in-

spectors on each side and a deputy returning officer who sits as a kind of judge to receive the votes. A man presents himself to vote and gives his name. If his vote is challenged by one of the inspectors, he can if he chooses, take the oath swearing that he has the qualifications necessary to vote. But it must be understood that each individual is known. It is not like a large city, where, very often, the voter is unknown. My hon. friend from King's (Mr. Macdonald) knows that the system works admirably.

Mr. DAVIN. If his qualifications is questioned, he may be called upon to take the oath?

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES.** Certainly. His name is entered on the poll-book and the fact that he has been sworn is also entered, in case of a scrutiny.

Mr. DAVIN. We have the same system in the North-west, and it works well.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES.** The character of the population, is no doubt, somewhat similar. Under such circumstances, it works well. I do not know how it would work in large cities.

Mr. WALLACE. Why?

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES.** Because the people are not known. Take the case of the city of Toronto, for instance, how would it be known whether a man had a right to vote or not?

Mr. WALLACE. According to the hon. Minister it does not matter, when this man comes up to vote, whether he has the right to vote or not. When objected to, he takes the oath and votes.

The **MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES.** There is a great deal of difference between a man taking an oath who is personally known to the deputy returning officer and the inspectors on either side, and that of a stranger who would at once disappear and nobody know where he was to be found. People do not take false oaths in the presence of their neighbours and friends.

Now I would like to submit a point for the consideration of the committee. What is the sense of discussing the principle of this Bill in Committee of the Whole? That principle has been affirmed. We have adopted the qualifications of the several provinces, and we are here to carry that out. I would suggest to the committee that it is not fair to discuss the principle of the Bill at this stage. We have taken up the discussion in committee in order to discuss the details. The Solicitor General has told the committee, with perfect frankness, that if any provisions of the Bill require amendment, he is prepared to consider any suggestions that may be made, and if he finds it desirable, to accept it, and I think that